

## Discipline

# Help your child understand the reasons behind your discipline

Middle school is a time of tremendous growth and change. It is also a time of questioning authority. Gone are the days, if they ever existed, when your child is likely to immediately do what you want.

You are still the most important person in your child's life and she wants to please you. But she also wants, and needs, a lot more say in what happens to her--or at least why it is happening.

Here are some pointers for helping your child accept and understand your discipline:

- Explain. Your child may not always realize that you impose a rule because you are concerned about her safety, for example. Share your thinking with your child. She still may not like the rule, but she will feel less frustration if she understands it.
- Work on the relationship. Talk with your child often--and not just about the ways she needs to improve. Express interest in what is going on in her life and also in her opinions. She's much more likely to listen and follow your directions when she knows you care about her as a person.
- Strive for fairness. Punishing your child just because you're angry is never a good idea. At this age, it backfires completely. Your child's focus will only be on what she thinks you did to her, not on what she should learn. So make sure consequences fit the infraction. If she fails to do her chores this afternoon, she has to stay in the next afternoon to do them.

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